

# Project Proposal: USDA State & Private Forestry Grant



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Applicants: Florida Division of Forestry

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Project: Healthy Forests Education: Why and How

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**Project Proposal Abstract:** Forest Health, biotic and abiotic components of unhealthy forests and their management are underrepresented topics in most natural resource education programs for K-12 students. This translates to an adult population with little understanding of the need for and the complexities involved in the maintenance of healthy forests. Development of "Keeping Forests Healthy" education kits will provide 4-H, FFA, PLT, Vo-Ag, and nature center leaders and teachers with much needed (and requested) aids for meeting critical educational needs. A needs assessment conducted by a M.S. Student at UF will precede development of deliverables, which are expected to include student workbooks, supplements to existing program materials (e.g., PLT, 4-H, etc.), videos/cd-roms, flashcards, an interactive web site, and educational specimen kits. There is currently no similar effort in the U.S. to address these needs and to provide such emphasis for public awareness of the country's growing unhealthy forest problem.

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**Project Partners:** Dr. Albert Mayfield, Forest Entomologist and Andrea Van Loan, Forest Biologist, FL-DOF; Dr. Jason Smith and Dr. Martha Monroe, UF School of Forest Resources & Conservation; Karen Weigelt, Forester @ FL-DOF's Bear Creek Educational Forest and Shaun Stewart, FL-DOF's Resource Training Officer and Director, FL-DOF's service foresters through the "Your Forest. Managed" initiative, FL-DOF's Future Farmers of America Forestry Training Camp. In addition to these listed collaborators, work will be conducted and materials will be produced with regular inputs from anticipated user groups.

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**Project Location:** Work will be conducted locally (UF at Gainesville, FL), but coordination will be statewide (Florida) and materials developed can/will be utilized regionally and nationally via programs referred to above.

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Expected Completion Quarter: Q4, 2010

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Total Federal Funding Request: \$ 215,000 (FY '08 - \$41,500, FY '09 - \$69,000, FY '10 - \$104,500)

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Total Proposal Budget (Including Matching Funds): \$ 430,000

Cost Category	REQUESTED	MATCH
Personnel	\$75,000	\$125,000
Materials & Supplies	\$20,000	\$20,000
Equipment	\$2,000	\$4,000
Travel	\$10,000	\$ 20,000
Contracts	\$18,000	
Production/Distribution	\$75,000	\$ 31,000
Training/Workshops	\$15,000	\$15,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$215,000</b>	<b>\$215,000</b>

**Project Description and Benefits:** Native insects and pathogens respond (sometimes in epidemic proportions) to both human and non-human influences, causing significant environmental and economic losses. Exotics continue to threaten forests with species and ecosystem losses on a colossal scale. Minimizing these adverse realities is hampered by a severe paucity of understanding of basic biological and ecological principles. Further, most Americans have no understanding of the importance of healthy forests. Materials developed via this project will target young audiences in order to impact these very real deficiencies in understanding, both conceptually and practically. In particular, materials will be developed to meet needs articulated in a comprehensive needs assessment that will poll instructors, teachers, and leaders in youth-oriented educational programs such as PLT, 4-H, FFA, Vo-Ag, and educational nature centers. This emphasis is being generated by repeated requests for assistance from Vo-Ag, 4-H, FFA and nature center teachers/instructors and will provide hands-on teaching/training aids and material supplements for existing FFA, 4-H, "Your Forest. Managed" and PLT materials. Educational materials will be pilot tested at the Division of Forestry's Bear Creek Educational Forest prior to final production and distribution. Project phases will follow the approximate outline below.

Phase 1. Needs assessment and curriculum framework development; January 2008 - July 2008 (no funding needed).

Phase 2. Masters students at UF-SFRC, with technical oversight from project partners, develop educational materials (when funding is authorized).

Educational resources to be considered include:

- a) preserved hands-on specimens as appropriate
- b) background conceptual educational aids for educators and youth
- c) cd-rom, dvd, and web site materials
- d) interactive lesson materials for elementary and secondary youth
- e) 4-H project books for elementary and secondary youth
- f) PLT supplements and activities for elementary youth
- g) appropriate updates and supplements for existing materials such as 4-H Forest Resource project books, Places We Live - Urban Forest Supplement for PLT, Give Forests and Hand, "Your Forest. Managed" etc. September 2008- June 2009.

Phase 3: Pilot testing of materials through FL-DOF's Bear Creek Educational Forest and FL-DOF's FFA Forestry Training Camp. June 2009- August 2009.

Phase 4: Revision and production of materials. September 2009- December 2009.

Phase 5: Presentation and training re the use of materials statewide (FL) to help teachers, extension agents, PLT Instructors, FFA and nature center leaders, etc. via teacher institutes, the 2010 Florida Forestry Teachers' Tour, FFA Camps, PLT workshops, and County Extension In-Service Training sessions. January 2010- August 2010.

Phase 6: A summative evaluation to determine use, utility and effectiveness of the materials developed. March 2010- September 2010

## Project Evaluation Criteria

### Discussion:

### National Relevance

Conserve Working Forest Landscape – This project will serve to conserve working forest landscapes in multiple ways. The health of our forests is a national issue and by providing educational awareness to all citizens will demonstrate how forests add to our economies, the quality of daily life, and the important role they play in maintaining an optimum environmentally sustainable future.

Protect Forests from Harm – Increased public knowledge on forest health issues can help combat exotic invasive plant and animal species (insects and disease), and prevent catastrophic wildfire events. To assist in achieving a national plan for better forest health the materials that would be produced from this project could be duplicated and distributed nationally.

Enhance Benefits Associated with Trees & Forests – This project will focus on demonstrating that rural and urban forests provide numerous benefits to the quality components of our society, e.g. clean air and water, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, and renewable resources. Economic and social values such as employment, energy savings, and property enhancement all benefit from good forest health.

**Project Evaluation Criteria**  
**Discussion: (Continued)**

**Regional Relevance:** The development of “Keeping Forests Healthy” education kits will provide teachers/instructors with much needed educational materials that address natural resource concerns and environmental awareness. Most of our K-12 educational systems have no adopted format for incorporating natural resource management ideol

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**Project Evaluation Criteria  
Discussion (Continued):**